

Hustler academics : Science in the interest of the rich and mighty.

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Abstract

Danah Boyd, Mizuko Ito, Joy Ito... “Am I cyber yet?” – a pastiche.

1 On hustler academics

The life and career of Danah Boyd can be summed up quickly.

A private education, Brown then MIT, lead her from one company to the next, Google then Microsoft.

She has not worked “*in the public interest*”, as the idiom goes, because she has never known the public service.

She likes talking about the “structures of power”. The same Danah Boyd who is now talking of “great reckoning” – but what was she doing all these years working in big tech? Had she not recognized, or identified them there?

For good reason, she turned to studying other topics, because she was blind to what was being done at Google or Microsoft. Or, perhaps, it was that she knew, but liked the money a little too much...

Of Danah Boyd it can be said here that never a day in her life she has done research in the social sciences; having never understood these same important sciences.

Hustler academic is your name.
Hustler academic is what you are;
became what you could only become.

You learned hustling from Mizuko Ito, whose brother is no other than Joy Ito (a hustler academic if there ever was one).

That’s shocking? Certainly no more that the e-mails exchanged at the MIT Media Lab, where administrators spoke openly of keeping large amounts of money hush-hush...

As to the bank accounts of Joy Ito, that’s a can of worms no one wants to open¹.

The incestuous MIT Media Lab circle, where nepotism is as rife as it was amongst popes and bishops of the Middle Ages.

The same institution, MIT, who failed Aaron Swartz, but is now set to publish works by Jean Cavailles...

Don’t look too far : the administrator of the University of Lilles who had the incredible audacity to tell Cavailles he was a deserter, and turned away... Don’t look too far : that administrator today would have been from MIT.

We know that not only from Swartz’ case, but from Andrew Huang’s, and from Star Simpson’s, and likely many others.

MIT is the most shameful institution in the United States – that’s not a statement you’ll find anywhere else either.

“I went to work for Ev Williams at Blogger (already acquired by Google). My title was ”ethnographic engineer.” (Gotta love Google titles.)” – she says.

But, you loved that Google salary too Danah... Let’s be honest here.

¹It wasn’t just that Epstein gave money to the Lab, he gave some to Ito himself according to the newspaper articles I was reading then – one is left wondering what kind of world these people live in... If they were not so busy with interest rates, they could produce actual science.

“And my job was to help the Blogger team better understand the diversity of practices unfolding in Blogger.” – she continues.

But, you mean “profiling”, Danah... That’s what you were doing.

—

She likes parroting Michel Foucault, a great thinker among great thinkers, but couldn’t even be 1% of him if she earnestly tried.

She likes minuscules for a good reason, too. — And, that’s how far as we’ll go.

2 Introducing a pastiche

This project, announced as “Science in the interest of the rich and mighty”, was originally conceived as a review of Danah Boyd’s work, but this was so only until we came to realize that there was nothing for us to work with – there was no “work”, no more than science being done here.

When we think of ethnography, and what ethnography can accomplish, we think of the great works : those of the young Pierre Bourdieu, done under duress in North Africa, or those on underground cultures by Howard Becker.

The greatest risk Danah Boyd ever submitted herself to was not updating her Windows anti-virus software...

And, so, instead, we resigned ourselves to writing a pastiche : everything knowable of her work is found there.

"am i cyber yet?"
a danah boyd pastiche

as i travelled the cyber nets, i could not help but wonder : am i real? human? or
more than human already? i am now connected to this massive and heterogenous mass.
i trembled at the thought of dangers lurking at every corner. mmm

but the cyber bullies cannot reach me. i am immaterial.

no less than a week ago i was in japan for my aikido lessons. the week before that i
had paid a visit to my personal guru in india.

my meditations have taken me many places, but no further than the 'net,
the www, this vast ocean of information

it is 2:30 am, and i am in a brooklyn apartment. the people around me feel so
distant, yet so close, i feel so connected to them. (OMG c o n n e c t e d)
ethnographic note : i must update my windows system

what had started but as an essay has now become a concept
connected-ness

no
[connected-ness] (c)

but will they accept me, and it?
mmmph

the end.

'On connected-ness'. To be soon published at MIT Press.

References

Boyd, Danah. 2015. "AM I A BLOGGER?" *Biography* 38(2) : 303-306.